

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center:	Pleasant Hill KinderCare	Enrollment:	166	License ID:	27466
Street:	1425 Copper Creek DR	City:	Pleasant Hill	IA Zip Code:	50327
County:	Polk				
Mailing Address:	1425 Copper Creek DR				
Mailing City:	Pleasant Hill	IA Zip Code:	50327		
Director's Name:	Jessica Gathercole	Center Phone Number:	515-262-3838		
On-Site Supervisors:	Gabriella Garcia and Ashley Newman - Fees	E-Mail Address:	301829@klcorp.com Jeremy.Todd@KinderCare.com		

Date of Complaint: 08-03-2026

Date of Visit: 08-05-2026

☒ Scheduled ☐ Unannounced ☐ NA

☒ Non-Compliance with Regulations Found ☐ Compliance with Regulations Found
RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE☒ NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended☐ PROVISIONAL license from _____ to _____☐ SUSPENSION of License☐ REVOCATION of License**Complaint Details:**Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ NoDid this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No**Summary of Complaint:**

It was alleged that on 7/29/26, staff member B.B. (initials) grabbed an almost three year old by the child's face and squeezed his face while telling the child something along the lines that we don't spit on our f***ing friends.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.12(2)a-d The center shall not use as a form of discipline: Center does not use corporal punishment including spanking, shaking, or slapping. Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Children shall never be locked in a room or closet. When restraints are part of a treatment plan for a child with a disability authorized by a parent and a psychologist or psychiatrist, staff shall receive training on the safe and appropriate use of the restraint. Punishment or threat of punishment associated with illness, toilet training, or food or rest is not to be used. No child is subject to verbal abuse, threats, derogatory remarks about child or child's family.

Inspection Findings:

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On 7/29/26, the director, Jessica Gathercole, emailed this consultant to inform him of the above alleged incident. Jessica stated that she had placed the staff member B.B. (initials) on leave and would talk to her staff as well as the parent of the child above. Later in the day, Jessica emailed this consultant again to inform him there were no marks left on the child's face after he woke up from nap time, but that they were moving forward with termination of staff member B.B. after she spoke to her supervisors.

On 8/3/26, a formal complaint regarding this allegation was called into Intake. This consultant contacted Jessica and set up 8/5/26 for this consultant and another HHS worker to visit the center and interview staff.

On 8/5/26, HHS worker Cassie Stowe and this consultant visited the center and touched base with director, Jessica Gathercole, and then interviewed staff members TW, AF, and FO as all three staff members witnessed the incident, work from time to time with the child, and/or were informed of the incident immediately after it happened. AF also spoke to BB about the incident in the office after it occurred. The child did have red marks after BB squeezed his face, but the red marks were gone by the time the child woke up from nap later on the day of the incident, 7/29/26. The child was reportedly spitting on some peers when BB squeezed his face and told him something along the lines of "we don't f***ing spit on our friends". This incident occurred around lunch time.

On 8/25/26, HHS worker Stowe and this consultant interviewed BB at the HHS Riverplace Office. BB initially denied any wrong. BB thought this complaint was retaliation for her complaint she made. BB changed her story as the interview went on. Initially, she stated she lightly placed her hand under the child's chin and informed him not to spit on friends. BB later stated she may have grabbed the child's face. BB denied ever swearing at the child.

There is sufficient evidence that BB acted inappropriately. Because of the unfortunate actions of now former staff member, BB, the center is FOUND TO BE IN NON-COMPLIANCE WITH LICENSING REGULATION 109.12(2)A-D AS IT PERTAINS TO DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN. THE CENTER DIRECTOR HANDLED THIS SITUATION APPROPRIATELY BY TAKING IMMEDIATE ACTION TO INITIALLY SUSPEND THE EMPLOYEE, INTERVIEWING STAFF, CONTACTING HER SUPERVISORS, INFORMING THE CHILD'S PARENT, CONTACTING THIS LICENSING CONSULTANT AND THEN ULTIMATELY MOVING TOWARDS TERMINATION OF THE EMPLOYEE.

Special Notes and Action Required:

All staff should review the center's discipline policy on what is allowed and what is not allowed for discipline of children. All staff should also review the licensing manual/COMM on discipline.

As stated above, the staff member responsible for inappropriate discipline is no longer employed at the center.

If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your consultant at 515-362-7832 or email Nathan.Knepper@hhs.iowa.gov so that we may discuss the issue. You may also send a letter that will be included in your licensing file noting any disagreement you may have with this report.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the HHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.

Consultant's Signature:

Nate Knepper

Date:

08-31-2026